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- [Local News](#)
- [Local Sports](#)
- [Sports Scores](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Births](#)
- [Public Records](#)
- [Police Reports](#)
- [Health News](#)
- [Financial News](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Town Hall](#)

Local News

Off the Record: Portrayal of Mary Todd Lincoln was a treat

By Diane Wilkins, Marion Daily Republican



I am not the most cultured or learned individual, but I do enjoy history and a good theatrical performance.

On Tuesday night, I was able to combine both of these enjoyments at the same time.

M. Kay duPont and Jeff Disend, from Atlanta, Ga., presented their performance of "An Evening with Mary and Abraham Lincoln." This was a fine performance that could be enjoyed by history buffs as well as those who claim to have no interest in history.

DuPont spent three years immersed in every historical fact about Mary Todd Lincoln that she could get her hands on.

After the performance, I had the opportunity to spend some time visiting with her and she made the comment that she almost became Mrs. Lincoln. She began thinking like her and reacting to situations like what she believed would have been Mrs. Lincoln's response.

Long before modern medicine had made the diagnosis of what is now called bipolar, Mary Todd Lincoln was labeled as difficult and bad-tempered. In retrospect, many experts now consider her to be the classic example of a person who is bipolar.

Tuesday night, I watched in amazement as duPont, with facial expressions and body language, switched from the euphoric, ecstatic phase to the deep depression.

The play is based on a book duPont wrote entitled "Loving Mr. Lincoln: The Personal Diaries of Mary Todd Lincoln." I have found it a book that is difficult to put down when you start reading. With my schedule, that is making it difficult for me. I get started reading and find myself staying up too late.

To add even more effect, duPont's husband, Jeff Disend does a shadowy portrayal of the President at pivotal points in the couple's lives.

- [Classifieds](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Directory](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Home](#)

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